

BANGLADESH-INDIA CEPA Something to look forward to

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

If implemented properly, Bangladesh stands to gain more from the proposed trade pact with India by way of higher exports and investment despite the loss in tariff revenue, found a Dhaka-Delhi joint feasibility study.

Called the Bangladesh-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), the proposed deal goes beyond the traditional free trade agreements and also addresses trade in services, investment, intellectual property rights and e-commerce.

Talks for the pact were initiated by India in 2018 against the backdrop of increasing Chinese investments in Bangladesh.

But formal negotiations are expected to begin soon as the CEPA will figure high on the agenda during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's scheduled visit to India from September 5 to 8.

The proposed deal, which calls for a withdrawal of duties, is expected to boost Bangladesh's exports by 190.15 percent and more if transaction costs were also reduced through improved connectivity, according to the study by the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute and the Indian Centre for Regional Trade based on the two countries' trade data between 2015 and 2020.

India's exports to Bangladesh are expected to increase by 188 percent.

The CEPA will increase Bangladesh's GDP by 1.72 percent and India's by 0.03 percent, the study found.

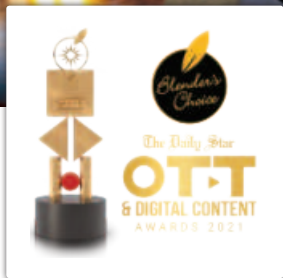
Currently, India is Bangladesh's second biggest trading partner after China. In fiscal 2021-22, Bangladesh's exports to India hit \$2 billion for the first time, while imports through the official channel stood at about \$10 billion.

However, if import through unofficial channels is factored in, the figure would stand at about \$14 billion.

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"Even if the gains appear to be lop-sided now, negotiations for CEPA should start without further delay."

**An author of joint feasibility study
Selim Raihan**



Winners of Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2021 pose for a photograph with Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, fourth from right, and Ispahani Group Chairman Mirza Salman Ispahani, third from right, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, extreme left, at the award ceremony at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre last night.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

OTT ushers in a brave new world

Blender's Choice - The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards launched

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ and MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

It was stars galore at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre as celebrities, influencers and artists alike were keen on witnessing a unique celebration -- Blender's Choice - The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2021.

The event was organised to recognise the best OTT and digital

contents from July 2020 to December 2021.

From 6:00pm onwards, stars walked the red carpet in a festive mood -- mingling with fans, having stylised glam shots taken.

At the stroke of 7:00, the excited audience settled down in the venue's Hall of Fame, with a thematic performance from the Alifa Dance Squad. The logo of the event was MORE ON PAGE 6

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"OTT is indeed the new normal of the media and entertainment industry... I'm sure these platforms will grow rapidly in near future."

Chairman of Ispahani Group
Mirza Salman Ispahani



"OTT platforms and digital contents have truly initiated a new era in our promising entertainment industry."

Commerce Minister
Tipu Munshi

AL, BNP headed for a face-off

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

With the ruling Awami League and opposition BNP unwavering in their stances, the country's politics seems set on a path towards confrontation, one and a half years away from the next general election.

The ruling party leaders said they would resist the BNP's "anarchy" with an iron hand. BNP leaders, on the other hand, said their movement this time was all about their existence and they would not yield.

Things started to heat up as the BNP activists took to the streets to protest the recent hike in prices of fuel and essentials. The huge turnouts at the opposition programmes had the government worried and it took a tough line.

Braving police action and attacks by the AL men, BNP leaders and activists came out in droves to join the protests.

On July 30, a BNP man was killed in a clash between police and the party activists in Bhola town. On August 3, another succumbed to the injuries he suffered in the clash. Then on September 1, another BNP activist was killed in a fight with police in Narayanganj. It all added to the heat.

Prof Al-Masud Hasanuzzaman, who teaches government and politics at Jahangirnagar University, said politics is leading back to the same old story of hostility.

"The BNP started taking to the streets with popular issues such as price hikes of daily essentials. The prime minister herself said the opposition will be given the space to protest. But that space is actually not being given. So, confrontation is inevitable," he said, adding that animosity and intolerance between the two parties were responsible for this.

On August 14, the PM said the opposition parties should be allowed to SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

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